

## **The County Prosecutor's Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy**

In each of the 21 county prosecutors' offices there is a county office of victim-witness advocacy. The job of each office is to help crime victims and to make sure all of the victim's rights are met. These offices are staffed with trained professionals who are victim-witness advocates.

## **Criminal Justice Orientation and Information**

Victim-witness counselors of the county office of victim-witness advocacy will explain the criminal justice system so that victims will know what will happen and when. If asked, victim-witness counselors can take a victim to the courtroom before the trial or grand jury hearing to explain exactly what will happen.

## **Victim Information and Impact Form**

You will have several chances to tell the assistant prosecutor and the judge about how the crime affected you. The county office of victim-witness advocacy will send you a victim information and impact form with the initial contact letter and at other times during the prosecution. County office staff can help you fill out the form and prepare both oral and written statements.

## **Counseling and Support Services**

The county office of victim-witness advocacy staff are trained to help you deal with the initial shock of the crime and the difficult emotional times afterward. If you feel that you would like to talk to someone on a regular basis, the staff can help you find a mental health counselor who may or may not charge you for services. Several county programs sponsor support groups for sexual assault victims and homicide survivors. Office staff can also assist victims to find a battered women's shelter or obtain food and clothing.

## **State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy**

The mission of the State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy is to support and expand victim-witness services across the state along with the law enforcement community. The goal of this program is to provide victims and witnesses with services that will help them cope with the aftermath of victimization and help make their participation in the system less difficult and burdensome. The state office works closely with the county offices and provides funding for many of their programs from federal and state funds.

## **New Jersey Victims of Crime Compensation Board**

The New Jersey Victims of Crime Compensation Board (VCCB) may help ease the financial burden faced by crime victims. Services covered by the VCCB include: benefits for mental health counseling, medical bills, loss of earnings, funeral expenses (up to \$5000), crime scene clean-up, relocation expenses, child care/day care services, Victims' rights attorney fees, domestic help, and other victim services related to crimes. For further information on filing procedure time requirement and benefit restrictions, please call 1-877-658-2221 or go to the website @ [www.njvictims.org](http://www.njvictims.org)

## **State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy**

**NJ Division of Criminal Justice**

**P.O. Box 085**

**Trenton, New Jersey 08625**

**(609) 896-8855**

**[victimassistance@dcj.lps.state.nj.us](mailto:victimassistance@dcj.lps.state.nj.us)**



Office of the Attorney General  
Department of Law & Public Safety

**NJ Division of Criminal Justice**  
**[njdcj.org](http://njdcj.org)**

# **Crime Victims Bill of Rights**

N.J.S. 52-4B-36

**New Jersey Division of  
Criminal Justice  
Office of Victim-Witness  
Advocacy**

# Your Rights as a Victim of Crime

This brochure provides basic information on your rights as a victim of crime in New Jersey. Most of the services described are available to you through the county offices of victim-witness advocacy and the Victims of Crime Compensation Board. All of the services detailed within are available to victims of adult offenders. Victims of juvenile offenders have different rights and can get information from your county victim-witness office. For more information please contact the State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy at 609-896-8855 or visit our website at [www.njvw.org](http://www.njvw.org).

## The Constitutional Amendment

### Article One - Paragraph 22, NJ Constitution

The New Jersey State Constitution includes guaranteed rights for crime victims, as follows:

A victim of crime shall be treated with fairness, compassion and respect by the criminal justice system. A victim of a crime shall not be denied the right to be present at public judicial proceeding except when, prior to completing testimony as a witness, the victim is properly sequestered in accordance with law or the Rule Governing the Courts of the State of New Jersey. A victim of a crime shall be entitled to those rights and remedies as may be provided by the Legislature.

## Crime Victims Bill of Rights

### N.J.S. 52-4B-36

Crime victims are entitled to the following certain basic rights:

- wTo be treated with dignity and compassion by the criminal justice system.
- wTo be informed about the criminal justice process.
- wTo be free from intimidation.
- wTo have inconveniences associated with participation in the criminal justice process minimized to the fullest extent possible.
- wTo make at least one telephone call from the police station provided the call is reasonable in both length and location called.
- wTo medical assistance if, in the judgment of the law enforcement agency, medical assistance appears necessary.
- wTo be notified if presence in court is not needed.
- wTo be informed about available remedies, financial assistance and social services.
- wTo be compensated for their loss whenever possible.
- wTo be provided a secure, but not necessarily separate, waiting area during court proceedings.
- wTo be advised of case progress and final disposition.
- wTo the prompt return of property when no longer needed as evidence.
- wTo submit a written statement about the impact of the crime to a representative of the county prosecutor's office which shall be considered prior to the prosecutor's final decision concerning whether formal criminal charges will be filed; and
- wTo make, prior to sentencing, an in-person statement directly to the sentencing court concerning the impact of the crime. This statement is to be made in addition to the statement permitted for inclusion in the persistence report.